

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 09571 161418Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 161250Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9987

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9571

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, IN

SUBJ: DESIRE OF INDIAN MINISTER K.D. MALAVIYA TO MEET WITH
SECRETARY

REF: BONN 11461

1. GERMAN EMBASSY OFFICER HAD TOLD AN EMBOFF OF REQUEST DESCRIBED IN REFTEL LAST WEEK, WITHOUT REVEALING NAME OF INDIAN MINISTER MAKING SUGGESTION TO WISCHNEWSKI, NOTING THAT GERMANS HAD BEEN REQUESTED TO TRANSMIT REQUEST THROUGH EMBASSY BONN. WE DID NOT PASS INFO TO DEPARTMENT IN ABSENCE OF ANY DETAIL AS TO WHOM WAS SPECIFICALLY INVOLVED ON INDIAN SIDE.

2. WE ARE AT A LOSS TO DECIPHER THE PURPOSES OR BONA FIDES OF THE MALAVIYA SUGGESTION. LATTER HAS NOT, EXCEPT ON PETROLEUM MATTERS, BEEN INVOLVED IN FOREIGN POLICY OR INTERNATIONAL DIPLO-MATIC EXCHANGES. HE IS NOT, SO FAR AS WE CAN GATHER, ONE OF MRS. GANDHI'S CONFIDANTS.

3. HISTORICALLY MALAVIYA HAS BEEN FROM THE FAR LEFT OF CON-
GRESS AND IN THE 1960S HE WAS ACTIVELY ANTI-US. SINCE HIS RE-
TURN TO THE CABINET IN 1974 AS MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND
NOW AS MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS HE HAS MADE SEVERAL
APPROACHES TO THIS EMBASSY OFFERING TO ACT AS A "BRIDGE" TO
IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS. HIS LINE HAS BEEN THAT AS A FORMER
LEFTIST HE CANNOT BE ATTACKED FROM THE LEFT WHILE AS AN ELDER
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STATESMAN WITH NO POLITICAL AMBITIONS OF HIS OWN HE CAN WORK FOR

CORPORATION WITH THE US WHICH WOULD BENEFIT INDIA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THESE APPROACHES WERE HIS OWN IDEA THOUGH IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT MRS. GANDHI WAS AWARE OF THEM. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS THIS DIALOGUE NEVER REALLY GOT STARTED.

4. MRS. GANDHI HAS OCCASIONALLY IN THE PAST USED "SPECIAL EMIS-SARIES" TO MEET WITH FOREIGN LEADERS SECRETLY. HER FORMER PRIVATE SECRETARY P.N. HAKSAR MET IN THIS WAY WITH THE SHAH IN 1973 AS A MOVE TOWARD IMPROVING INDO-IRANIAN RELATIONS. IN THE CONVOLUTED HOUSEHOLD POLITICS IN INDIA TODAY, IT IS JUST BARELY CONCEIVABLE THAT MALAVIYA MAY HAVE BEEN GIVEN SOME AUTHORIZATION TO SEEK A HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARY, WHETHER ON INDO-US RELATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM POLITICS, OR THE MIDDLE EAST. WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING FROM ANY COLLATERAL SOURCE TO SUPPORT THIS, HOWEVER.

5. IN VIEW OF ABOVE HISTORY AND UNCERTAINTY AS TO REASONS FOR MALAVIYA APPROACH WE RECOMMEND SECRETARY IGNORE APPROACH TO WISCHNEWSKI. WE WILL TRY TO DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT HERE.

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